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NOTE TO ASSIGNMENT EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS: Senator Mikulski's remarks on the Senate floor are available for broadcast quality download.

Audio of Senator Mikulski's remarks is available – here.

*Video of Senator Mikulski's remarks is available – here.* 

## MIKULSKI URGES SENATE SUPPORT FOR BIPARTISAN THUD APPROPRIATIONS BILL THAT CREATES JOBS AND MEETS COMPELLING HUMAN NEEDS

"Steel rusts. Asphalt wears out. Buildings need to be repaired and maintained. It is not politics. It's physics. We have to make investments today so that our nation can grow," Senator Says

Bipartisan THUD bill was approved by the full Appropriations Committee in June and is the first of the FY14 spending bills to be considered by the full Senate

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, today spoke on the Senate floor to urge the Senate to support the fiscal year 2014 *Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations Bill*, which cleared a procedural hurdle by a bipartisan vote of 73 to 26 earlier today and is now being considered by the full Senate. The THUD bill keeps America moving by creating jobs through infrastructure development, ensures the safety of our transportation system and supports communities through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and vital housing assistance for our most vulnerable – veterans, seniors and the disabled.

"This bill will put Americans to work, and it will also meet our compelling needs. And we can do it in a way that shows that we can do smart spending to accomplish national goals," Senator Mikulski said. "This bill keeps America moving on land, sea and in the air. But most of all, it's about the bread and butter issues. It meets real needs in real time, building roads and building communities. It focuses on two things: America's infrastructure in transportation and meeting compelling human need in housing and urban development, both of which contribute to creating jobs in the United States of America. This isn't a bill where jobs will be on a slow boat to China or a fast track to Mexico. It puts America on the right track to meet these needs in transportation."

The bill helps our communities and transportation system by focusing on five priority areas.

- Investing in transportation infrastructure;
- Providing housing and services to our Nation's most vulnerable;
- Supporting our communities and addressing the nation's housing needs;
- Ensuring the safety of our transportation system; and
- Promoting sustainability in our communities.

More details on the specific provisions of the bill are available from the Appropriations Committee here.

The bipartisan THUD bill was approved by the full Appropriations Committee by a bipartisan vote of 22 to 8 in June and is the first of the fiscal year 2014 spending bills to be considered by the full Senate.

Senator Mikulski's remarks on the Senate floor, as delivered, follow:

"I rise as the Chair of the of the Appropriations Committee in support of the fiscal year 2014 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations Bill. At noon we will be voting on the motion to proceed. I am here to say in the strongest, most affirmative way, that I urge my colleagues to please vote 'yes' so we can get on with this very important bill that was fashioned with bipartisan participation to literally get America moving again.

"The THUD Appropriations bill for 2014, under the leadership of Senator Patty Murray and Ranking Member Senator Susan Collins, is an outstanding effort. It shows what bipartisan consensus is. It focuses on two things: America's infrastructure in transportation and meeting compelling human need in housing and urban development, both of which contribute to creating jobs in the United States of America. This isn't a bill where jobs will be on a slow boat to China or a fast track to Mexico. It puts America on the right track to meet these needs in transportation.

"There's a very good reason that we need this bill. The American Civil Engineers Society says the need for physical infrastructure for our country is piling up. Steel rusts. Asphalt wears out. Buildings need to be repaired and maintained.

"It is not politics. It's physics. We have to make investments today so that our nation can grow.

"We still have an unemployment rate of over seven percent, so how do we get America moving? Public investments that create private-sector jobs. That's what we like about transportation.

"This bill, under the leadership of Senators Murray and Collins, includes funds for the Federal Aviation Administration for airports. It includes the Federal Highway Administration to build and repair roads. It includes Amtrak and also the National Transportation Safety Board – when there is an accident, they are on the job finding out what the problems are. This bill keeps America moving on land, sea and in the air. But most of all, it's about the bread and butter issues. It meets real needs in real time, building roads and building communities.

"This is why I'm also a strong supporter of the Housing and Urban Development aspects of this bill. The Presiding Officer knows of my social work background. I know of his time as a County Executive, working hand in hand with the people – and meeting the needs of the people – on the Delmarva Peninsula. We know there's prosperity and pockets of poverty. This bill, through the Community Development Block Grants, helps meet these compelling needs – local needs decided by local leaders in real time.

"It also meets our needs for the elderly and the disabled. The Senate bill provides an allocation under my leadership of \$54 billion in discretionary spending. The House bill provides \$10 billion less than the Senate. The House allocation fails to provide those resources in transportation. Senators Murray and Collins will go into that in more detail.

"But what I wanted to be able to say is that under my leadership as the full Committee Chair, my subcommittees have marked up at the budget agreement top line of \$1.058 trillion. Everyone goes, 'Oh my God, a trillion dollars.' Well remember, \$600 billion goes to defense, \$400 billion goes to domestic needs. If ever there were domestic needs, it's in our infrastructure in meeting the tattered worn aspects of our community.

"There is much debate going in our country now because of the Trayvon Martin-George Zimmerman situation. A debate has begun really under our President's encouragement on race, ethnicity and other aspects. What we need to be able to do is take stock of ourselves, how we treat one another, how we view one another. Do we view one another as enemies consistently or do we begin to look at how we build a sense of community in our neighborhoods, starting with housing for the elderly, making sure the disabled are taken care of, respect for one another, passing an education bill and dealing with student loans.

"This bill will put Americans to work, and it will also meet our compelling needs. And we can do it in a way that shows that we can do smart spending to accomplish national goals. I too want to reduce the public debt of the United States, but I also want to lower our unemployment rate. I want to lower the rate of danger in our physical infrastructure. And I really want the motion to proceed to pass."

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